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children derived a quarter of his inheritable qualities from each of his four grandparents, and, consequently, a quarter of them from the Conqueror. Now let us suppose that these grandchildren had all intermarried with each other, and that their children and descendants had continued to marry exclusively with each other; then every descendant, no matter how remote, would have to refer one-quarter of his inheritable qualities ultimately to the Conqueror. Here there would be no dissipation of the strain, and whatever virtue may be supposed to lie in royal Norman blood might legitimately be claimed by any member of the family.

Claimants to noble or royal descent can argue that a process similar to this, only, of course, not so exclusive, actually did take place. Princes and nobles of the eleventh and succeeding centuries, they might say, did not intermarry with the common people. Their own class was always large enough to supply them with wives. An occasional *mésalliance*, of course, introduced now and then an infusion of plebeian blood, which would be of some consequence to the immediate descendants of such a marriage; but unless such an occurrence were constantly repeated, it would, after a few generations, be quite insignificant. In the same way, when a duke's daughter, for example, married the coachman, and she and her descendants were repudiated by the class from which she had sprung, the microscopic particle of noble blood to be found in one of her remote descendants would be very slight excuse for pretensions to nobility, and here Judge Clark's arguments would have force. But such spurious pretensions as this do not affect the claims of the genuine stock.

Thus we see that there is after all some ground for the belief in the significance of noble birth, if heredity counts for anything. In countries where there has always been a sharp line of demarcation between patricians and plebeians, the claim of any member of either class to his share of the virtues of his class is perfectly legitimate. Those of us who do not pretend to royal origin can at any rate claim one important advantage. Among common folk the ne'er-do-weel and the criminal are likely to find it difficult to marry, so that their breed has not the same chance of being propagated as that of the honest and intelligent. But we have never yet heard that immorality or lack of brains in a prince was found an insuperable obstacle to his marriage.

GEORGE CLARKE.

THE IDEAL FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING.

WHEN one intends to build a house in which he and his family expect to live, before even an architect is consulted, many an evening is spent in laying out on paper those features which, by both the man and his wife, are deemed necessary. It is no doubt true that these very essentials, or some of them at least, finally give way before the suggestions of the architect. The fact remains, however, that those most interested in the house have given much thought to the matter, and, when finally seeking expert assistance, are able to give their architect certain features which to them seem to be necessary to their comfort and to the needs of housekeeping. In contrast to this care and thought, one has but to turn to the average public building erected and paid for by the municipality. Such a building, as a rule, bears no evidence that its needs and purposes have received any proper consideration from those having charge of its construction. Indeed,

a very large number of such buildings testify to the undoubted fact that the outside has been the one problem considered, the inside details being left to develop themselves. There are no public buildings of which this criticism is truer than it is of public libraries, whether built by private munificence or at the expense of the municipality. Few public library buildings are to any extent fitted to their purposes or adapted to the best uses of the public. There is no intention here of suggesting that architectural effect should be lost sight of. On the contrary, the writer is an earnest enthusiast for the much needed reform in the architecture of public buildings. He does, however, wish to be understood as insisting that the uses to which any building is to be put, not alone for the present, but for the future as well, should be well thought out, and its interior carefully planned and determined on, before the problem of erecting its shell, or outside covering, is even considered.

In many libraries the public, their owners, are shut out from the use of a large part of the building by reason of the needlessly large space given over to the mere storing of the books. In a library with which the writer is somewhat familiar, seven-eighths of the floor area was, until recently, taken up by the book shelves and administration, only one-eighth being devoted to the uses of the reading public. One fundamental rule of library construction on which the writer of these lines would insist, is that as small a space as possible should be set aside for the housing of the books and for the purpose of administration, due regard, of course, being given to the natural increase, not only in the number of books, but in their users as well. As, however, the arrangement of the book-room and the question of administration cannot well be discussed without becoming technical, and, as the purpose of this article is to consider the library from the standpoint of the public, rather than from that of the librarian, it may be as well to proceed at once to those points in which the reading public will take the greater interest.

There are not a few public libraries in the country in which the museum idea has been engrafted on that of the library. This is a distinct error, unless, as happens in a few libraries, the room set apart for a museum, or art gallery, is separated from the library proper. It may be seen at a glance that having one room serve the double purpose of reading room and museum must prove to be a fatal mistake; for the reader should not have his quiet intruded upon by the museum visitor, who, if he be not alone, will wish, and rightfully too, to talk with his companion as to the articles of interest which he has been invited to examine. These two uses are as incompatible as would be a room used jointly for study and for music. As a rule of construction, it may be said that any town or city which supports a free public library should provide these three essentials: First, a room where those who are simply waiting for books may talk freely but quietly. This should be so located that the coming and going of the book-borrowers should not interfere with the book readers in other parts of the building. Second, a reading-room, well lighted, and both airy and cheerful, within which the reader should find newspapers, magazines, and periodicals ready at hand. In large libraries a separate room might well be set aside for newspapers alone. Third, a room for the student, where should be found such reference books as the library contains, to which books the reader should have unhindered access. This room should serve as the public's study; the quietness of which should never be disturbed. These three features are essential in every library. Added to them, the ideal

public library building, the consideration of which these lines have in mind, should contain another room devoted to the use of children, in which—if the trustees have been fortunate in securing the right woman as an attendant—work may be done which, in its far-reaching and beneficial effects, will be second to none accomplished in any part of the library. In this room will be formed an early taste for reading, and, if tact, patience, and kindly nature have been used, the child will, when graduating therefrom, carry with him to the main library that sense of the proper use of books as to make that use, not only of greater benefit to himself, but to all others with whom he comes in contact. This thought is by no means visionary or Utopian. Those familiar with what is being done by librarians can easily name a number of libraries in which such work is being most successfully carried on. This room may well serve a twofold purpose. Being used by the children during certain hours of the day, it might be devoted at certain other hours to such work as may be suggested through a close and hearty co-operation between the librarian and the superintendent of the town's schools. To this room a teacher in the high-school might very properly be permitted to take his class, that its members should together have the privilege of studying such books of reference as relate to some given subject.

Still another room may well be provided, the necessity for which is perhaps rarely considered, but which is called for by an existing condition too often ignored. The poorer element of a community, as if by instinct, shrinks from availing itself of privileges, if doing so necessitates the use of rooms designed and furnished in a way to which its members are not accustomed. This condition applies forcibly to the man who, never having used the library, or given any thought to the question of reading, is approached by the librarian with the view of making him a user of the books under his charge. This man will be sure to feel that the very atmosphere of the library, its reading-room and its alcoves for study, are unfitted to him, and he will not be willing to make the effort to adjust himself to such conditions.

For this class of the community—which, of course, does not include those of its members who have already acquired the taste for reading—a room may well be reserved, to supply the place of the village reading-room, which has been, in so very many towns, successfully introduced. It would not be long before many of its users would wish to graduate thence to the rooms above, where they might find the books better fitted to their changed conditions. The ideal library—if, indeed, it is to justify its name of free public library—should include all of these means of usefulness. It should avoid everything spectacular. Its every foot of space should be made use of to inculcate a love of reading and to provide pleasant, cheerful rooms adapted to the uses of its many frequenters. Its construction should receive the careful and earnest thought of those to whom the citizens have intrusted it. Such a building will surely prove to be, in the hands of progressive trustees and an earnest librarian, a power in the community for doing good, the extent of which can not be measured.

E. C. HOVEY.

WORKING-CLASS TENEMENTS IN LONDON.

LONDON, it may now be fairly claimed, is in a position to give other large cities a few points concerning the tenement problem. It would be remarkable if it were not so; for in one way or another the problem of adequately and decently housing the industrial classes in the English